



NEWS RELEASE

August 26, 2002

U.S. Border Patrol Agents Seize Marijuana and Pipe Bomb During Routine Traffic Checkpoint Inspection

What began as a routine marijuana seizure at a Border Patrol Traffic Checkpoint Sunday led agents to the discovery of a pipe bomb in a gym bag in a late model pickup.

The seizure was made Sunday at the Ysleta Border Patrol Station at the Highway 62/180 checkpoint, east of El Paso. Agents made two arrests in connection with the seizure, which involved 31-pounds of marijuana, valued at approximately \$25,000, and an explosive device. The device consisted of a six-inch PVC pipe with PVC end caps, and a two-inch hobby fuse.

A total of nine heat-sealed bundles of marijuana and a pipe bomb were found Sunday evening when two occupants approached the primary inspection lane of the U.S. Border Patrol checkpoint. The agent in the primary inspection lane questioned the two occupants as to their citizenship and it was determined that both subjects were U.S. citizens from Kansas City, Missouri. Both subjects displayed unusual mannerisms that prompted agents to further inspect the vehicle. A non-intrusive canine search on the vehicle led agents to the stash of marijuana in the spare tire of the vehicle. The pipe bomb was then located in the gym bag.

Both subjects were placed under arrest. U.S. Border Patrol agents contacted the El Paso Police Department Bomb Disposal Unit in conjunction with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). The bomb was detonated, and fragments were collected from the detonation for further evidence collection and prosecution.

U.S. Border Patrol obtained criminal history on one of the subjects that revealed a prior felony arrest for stealing a motor vehicle. The multi-agency investigation will continue. This is the first encounter of a pipe bomb by Border Patrol agents in recent memory.

The contraband and two subjects were turned over to the Hudspeth County Sheriff's Office. Investigators will continue the investigation into why the occupants were carrying the explosive device and their intent.

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